

A
 DESCRIPTION
 OF THE
 SERIES OF PICTURES

PAINTED BY

JAMES BARRY, Esq. R.A.

PROFESSOR OF PAINTING TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

AND PRESERVED IN

THE GREAT ROOM

OF THE

SOCIETY

INSTITUTED AT LONDON,

FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF

ARTS, MANUFACTURES,
 AND COMMERCE.

TO THIS IS ADDED,

A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF

SOME OTHER WORKS OF ART,

With which the Room is ornamented.

L O N D O N :

Printed by T. SPILSBURY and Son, Snow-hill.

M.DCC.XCII.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]



A

DESCRIPTION, &c.

GENERAL SUBJECT.

THIS series consists of Six Pictures, on useful and agreeable subjects, so connected as to illustrate this great maxim, or moral truth, viz. THAT THE OBTAINING HAPPINESS, AS WELL INDIVIDUAL AS PUBLIC, DEPENDS ON CULTIVATING THE HUMAN FACULTIES. To prove the truth of this doctrine, the first Picture exhibits mankind in a savage state, full of imperfection, inconvenience, and misery. The second represents a Harvest-Home, or Thanksgiving to Ceres and Bacchus; the third, the Victors at Olympia; the fourth, Navigation, or the Triumph of the Thames; the fifth, the Distribution

of Rewards by the Society; and the sixth, Elysium, or the State of final Retribution. Three of these subjects are truly poetical, the others historical.

The pictures are all of the same height, viz. eleven feet ten inches; and the first, second, fourth, and fifth, are fifteen feet two inches long; the third and sixth, which occupy the whole breadth of the room, at the North and South ends, are each forty-two feet long.

Between the upper edge of the Pictures, and the cornice of the room, runs a scroll of palm branches, which, with the frames, are of burnished gold.

FIRST PICTURE.

O R P H E U S.

THE scenery of this Picture exhibits a view of a mountainous and desert country; near the centre of the piece, is Orpheus,

pheus, holding in his left hand a lyre, and extending his right hand towards Heaven, representing him as he really was, the founder of the Grecian Theology.

The story of Orpheus has exercised the pencils of many Painters, who, by realizing the poetical metaphor, have overlooked every thing valuable in it; but Mr. Barry, instead of surrounding him with such auditors as Trees, Birds, and wild Beasts, has united in his character the Legislator, the Divine, and the Philosopher, and has placed him in a wild and savage country, surrounded by people as uncultivated as the land they inhabit; whilst he, as a messenger from the Gods, to whose mansions he seems pointing, is pouring forth songs of instruction, which he accompanies with the music of his lyre.

By the action of Orpheus, the song appears the principal, and the music an accessory part; his hearers, who are re-

presented in what is called a state of nature, are most of them armed with clubs, and clad in the spoils of wild beasts; al-
luding to their being possessed of courage and strength to subdue lions and tigers, but wanting wisdom and skill to prevent retaliation on themselves, or their feeble offspring. This latter circumstance is finely illustrated, by a woman at some distance, on the other side of a river, milking a goat, her two children sitting near her, at the entrance of their habitation, a cave, where they are but poorly fenced against a lion, who discovers them, as he is prowling about for prey: still further in the distance, are seen two horses, one run down by a tiger; by this incident is clearly pointed out, that the want of human culture is an evil, which extends beyond our own species, to all animals intended for domestication, and which have no other defence than the wisdom and industry of man.

It

It is a circumstance often observed by travellers, that the value and estimation of women increases according to the growth and cultivation of society, and that, among savage nations, they are in a condition little better than beasts of burden ; all offices of fatigue and labour, war and hunting excepted, being reserved for them. It is to prove the truth of this observation, that a woman is leaning on her male companion, and carrying a dead fawn on her shoulder. As Orpheus is said to have taught the use of letters, the theogony or generation of the Gods, and the worship due to them, there are placed near him, papers, the mundane egg, a lamb bound, a fire kindled, and other materials of sacrifice ; in the extreme distance, Ceres appears as just lighting on the world. The countenances of those savages, who are supposed to have profited by the divine lessons of Orpheus, are happily contrasted with those of another group, who have not

yet attended to his doctrine, and shew, with peculiar energy, the effect of those benefits which accrue to mankind from philosophy and religion.

S E C O N D P I C T U R E .

A GRECIAN HARVEST-HOME.

THE warm glow of colouring spread over this Picture, and the elegance of the figures in the more conspicuous parts of it, form a striking and beautiful contrast to the Picture already described. The season is, as the title expresses, that of harvest; and as most of the persons represented are employed in rural sports, the evening is chosen, as the most proper for such relaxation from the labours of the field.

In the fore-ground is a double terminal figure of Sylvanus and Pan, with their proper attributes; round which, young
men

men and women, in beautiful forms, and lightly habited, are dancing to the music of a rural pipe, and seem, in the language of the Poet, to

“ ———trip it as they go

“ On the light fantastic toe.”

Behind them, are oxen with a load of corn, and other characteristic emblems of the season of the year. On one side of this happy group, appears the father, or master of the feast, with a fillet round his head, and in his hand a staff; with him, his aged wife, as entering to behold and partake of the festivity of the scene.

In the opposite corner of the picture, are some rustics sitting, with the fruits of the earth, and implements of husbandry, near them: these might serve as a foil, if any foil were necessary, to the beautiful dancing figures already described.

The distant parts of this pleasing picture, exhibit a view of a fertile cultivated country, with a farm-house,
near

near which, there are men wrestling: one of the lookers-on has a *discus* under his arm; and aged men are sitting and lying along, discoursing, and enjoying a view of those athletic sports, in which they can no longer engage. Here also are seen the various employments of a country life, as binding corn, tending bees, courtship, marriage, and a number of children every where; in short, whatever can best point out a state of happiness, simplicity, and fecundity; in which, though not attended with much *éclat*, the duty we owe to God, our neighbours, and ourselves, is perhaps much better attended to, than in any other state of life. Still further to embellish this picture, the Artist has introduced, sitting on a pent-house, a peacock in fine plumage; and at the top of the picture, Ceres, Bacchus, Pan, &c. are looking down on the innocent festivity of their happy votaries: behind them is a limb of the zodiac, with

with the signs Leo, Virgo, and Libra, which mark the season of the year.

THIRD PICTURE.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA.

IN this superb Picture, the Artist has happily chosen that point of time, when the Victors in the several games are passing in procession, before the Hellanodicks, or Judges, where they are crowned with olive, in the presence of all the Grecians. At the right-hand corner of the piece, the three Judges are seated on a throne, ornamented with medallions of Solon and Lycurgus, and with trophies of the victories of Salamis, Marathon, and Thermopyle. Near the foot of the throne, is a table, at which a person appears writing, on a scroll of parchment, the name, family, and country of the conqueror; near this table, a victor, in the
foot-

foot-race, having already received a branch of palm, which he holds in his hand, is crowning by an inferior Hellanodick; next him is a foot-racer, who ran armed with a helmet, spear, and shield. Close following is seen a manly group, formed of two young athletic figures, bearing on their shoulders their aged father; the one of these represents a Pancratiast, the other the victor at the cestus: the old man is Diagoras of Rhodes, who, having in his youth been celebrated for his victories in the games, has, in his advanced age, the additional felicity of enjoying the fruit of the virtuous education he has given his sons, amidst the acclamations of the people of Greece; some of whom are strewing flowers around the old man's head, while one of his friends is grasping his right hand, and supposed to be making the celebrated speech recorded on this occasion, "Now, Diagoras, die, for thou canst not be made a God." A child has hold of the arm of one of the victors,

victors, and is looking up, with joy in its countenance, at the honours conferred upon his parent: near this beautiful group are seen a number of persons, the chief of whom represents Pericles, speaking to Cymon. The Painter has, in the person of Pericles, introduced the likeness of the late Earl of Chatham. Next appears, in the front of the Picture, a horse-racer, and close to him, a chariot drawn by four horses: in the chariot is Hiero of Syracuse; round the chariot are several persons, with musical instruments, accompanied by many youths, forming a chorus, which is led by Pindar, playing on a lyre.

As, at one end of this Picture, there is a figure of Minerva in *chiaro oscuro*; so, at the other end, is a statue of Hercules, painted in the same manner; which are comprehensive exemplars of that strength of body and mind, which were the great objects of Grecian education. On the base of the statue of Hercules, the
 Artist

Artist has introduced his own portrait, holding in his hand a picture conformably to the history of Timanthus, as related by Pliny.

The distance in this capital Picture, is ornamented with a view of a beautiful Grecian temple, the town of Elis, and the river Alpheus, as truly characteristic of the spot on which the ceremony that forms the subject of the picture, may be supposed to have been performed.

FOURTH PICTURE.

THE THAMES.

THE practice of personifying rivers, and representing them by a Genius, adapted to their peculiar circumstances, is as ancient as the arts of Painting and Sculpture; and in conformity to this practice, the ingenious Artist has in this picture represented the Thames, of a venerable, majestic,

majestic, and gracious aspect, sitting on the waters in a triumphal car, steering himself with one hand, and holding in the other the Mariner's Compass, by the use of which, modern navigation connects places the most remote, and has arrived at a certainty, importance, and magnitude unknown to the ancient world. The car is borne along by our great navigators, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sebastian Cabot, and the late Captain Cook, of amiable memory: in the front of the car, and apparently in the action of meeting it, are four figures, representing Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, ready to lay their several productions in the lap of the Thames.

Sir John Denham, in his celebrated eulogium on this River, has expressed this circumstance very happily.

“ Nor are his blessings to his banks

“ confin'd,

“ But free and common, as the sea or

“ wind,

“ When

" When he, to boast, or to disperse his
 " stores,
 " Full of the tributes of his grateful
 " shores,
 " Visits the world, and, in his flying
 " tow'rs,
 " Brings home to us, and makes both
 " Indies ours ;
 " Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it
 " where it wants ;
 " Cities in deserts, woods in cities
 " plants.
 " So that to us no thing, no place is
 " strange,
 " While his fair bosom is the world's
 " exchange."

Over-head is Mercury, the emblem of
 Commerce, summoning the nations toge-
 ther ; and following the car, are Nereids,
 carrying several articles of the manufac-
 tures of Manchester, Birmingham, &c.
 The sportive appearance of some of these
 Nereids, gives a variety to the picture,
 and is intended to shew, that an extensive
 com-

commerce is sometimes found subversive of the foundations of virtue.

In this scene of triumph and joy, the Artist has introduced Music, and, for this reason, has placed among the Sea-Nymphs his friend Dr. Burney, whose abilities in that line are universally acknowledged.

In the distance is a view of the Chalky Cliffs on the English coast, with ships sailing, highly characteristic of the commerce of this country, which the picture is intended to record.

FIFTH PICTURE.

THE SOCIETY.

THIS Picture represents the distribution of the rewards in the Society, founded for the noble purpose of introducing and perfecting those useful Arts in this coun-

B

try,

try, for which we were formerly obliged to have recourse to other nations. Not far advanced from the left side of the Picture, stands Lord Romney, the President of the Society, habited, as all the other Noblemen are, in the robes of his dignity : near the President stands his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales ; and sitting at the corner of the Picture, holding in his hand the instrument of the Institution, is Mr. William Shipley, “ whose public “ spirit gave rise to this Society.”* One of the Farmers who are producing specimens of Grain to the President, is Arthur Young, Esq. near him is Mr. More, the present Secretary, distinguishable by the pen he holds. On the right hand of Lord Romney, stands the Hon. Charles Marsham, V. P. and on the left, Owen Salusbury Brereton, Esq. V. P. Towards the center of the Picture is seen that distin-

* These words are engraven on the Gold Medal voted to Mr Shipley in the year 1758.

that distinguished example of female excellence, Mrs. Montague, who appears recommending the ingenuity and industry of a young female, whose work she is producing. Near her are placed the late Duchess of Northumberland, Earl Percy, V. P. Joshua Steele, Esq. V. P. the late Sir George Savile, Bart. V. P. Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, Soame Jennings, and James Harris, Esqrs. and the two Duchesses of Rutland and Devonshire: between these Ladies, the late Dr. Samuel Johnson seems pointing out this example of Mrs. Montague, to their Graces attention and imitation.

Farther advanced is his Grace the Duke of Richmond, V. P. and near him Edmund Burke, Esq. Still nearer the right-hand side of the Picture, is Edward Hooper, Esq. V. P. and the late Keane Fitz Gerald, Esq. V. P. His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, V. P. the Earl of Radnor, V. P. William Lock, Esq. and Dr. William Hunter, are examining

some drawings by a youth, to whom a premium has been adjudged : behind them is another youth, in whose countenance the dejection he feels at his being disappointed in his expectation of a reward, is finely expressed. Near the right side of the piece are seen, the Lord Viscount Folkestone, first President of the Society, his son the late Earl of Radnor, V. P. and Dr. Stephen Hales, V. P. In the back ground appears part of the water-front of Somerset House, St. Paul's, &c. serving to characterize this, as the Society instituted at London. And, as a very large part of the rewards bestowed by the Society, have been distributed to promote the Polite Arts of Painting and Sculpture, the Artist has also most judiciously introduced a Picture and a Statue : the subject of the Picture is the Fall of Lucifer, designed by Mr. Barry, when the Royal Academy had selected six of the members to paint Pictures for St. Paul's Cathedral ; the Statue is that of the Grecian Mother dying,

and

and in those moments attentive only to the safety of her child.

SIXTH PICTURE.

ELYSIUM, OR THE STATE OF FINAL RETRIBUTION.

IN this sublime Picture, which occupies the whole length of the Room, the Artist has, with wonderful sagacity, brought together those great and good men of all ages and nations, who have acted as the cultivators and benefactors of mankind. This Picture is separated from that of the Society distributing its rewards, by palm-trees; near which, on a pedestal, sits a pelican, feeding its young with its own blood; a happy type of those personages represented in the picture, who had worn themselves out in the service of mankind. Behind the palms, near the top of the picture, are in-

distinctly seen, as immersed and lost in the great blaze of light, Cherubims veiled with their wings, in the act of adoring and incensing something not seen above them, and out of the Picture, from whence the light and glory proceeds, which are diffused over the whole piece. By thus introducing the idea of the divine essence, by effect, rather than by form, the absurdity committed by many Painters is happily avoided, and the mind of every intelligent spectator is filled with awe and reverence. The first group in this picture, consists of Roger Bacon, Archimedes, Descartes, and Thales; behind them stand Sir Francis Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo, and Sir Isaac Newton, who are looking at a Solar System, which two Angels are unveiling and explaining to them: near the inferior Angel is Columbus, and close to him, Epaminondas, Socrates, Cato the younger, the elder Brutus, and Sir Thomas More; a Sextumvirate, to which, Swift says, all ages have
not

not been able to add a seventh. Near Brutus is Mr. William Molyneux; and behind Columbus is Lord Shaftesbury, John Locke, Zeno, Aristotle, and Plato; and in the opening between this group and the next, are Dr. William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, and the Honourable Robert Boyle. The next group are Legislators, where King Alfred the Great is leaning on the shoulder of William Penn, who is shewing his Code of Laws to Lycurgus. On the other side of Penn stand Minos, Trajan, Antoninus, Peter the Great of Russia, Edward the Black Prince, Henry the Fourth of France, and Andrea Doria of Genoa. Here too are introduced those Patrons of Genius, Lorenzo de Medicis, Louis the Fourteenth, Alexander the Great, Charles the First, Colbert, Leo the Tenth, Francis the First, and the Earl of Arundel: just before this group, on the rocks which separate Elysium from the Infernal Regions, are placed the An-

gelic Guards, see Milton, book iv. verse 549; and in the most advanced part an Arch-Angel, whose countenance and action bear evident marks of concern, is weighing what is not seen: behind this figure is another Angel, explaining something to Pascal and Bishop Butler.

Behind Francis the First and Lord Arundel, are Hugo Grotius, Father Paul, and Pope Adrian.

Near the center, towards the top of the Picture, sits Homer; on his right hand, Milton; next him, Shakespeare, Spenser, Chaucer, and Sappho; behind her sits Alcæus, who is talking with Ossian; near him are Menander, Moliere, Congreve, Bruma, Confucius, Mango Capac, &c. Next Homer, on the other side, is the Archbishop of Cambray, with Virgil leaning on his shoulder; near them, Tasso, Aristo, and Danté; behind Danté, Petrarch, Laura, Giovanni, and Boccacio. In the second range of Figures, over Edward

ward the Black Prince and Peter the Great, are Swift, Erasmus, and Cervantes; near them, Pope, Dryden, Addison, and Richardson; behind Dryden and Pope are Sterne, Gray, Goldsmith, Thomson, and Fielding; and near Richardson, Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, and Vandyke; next Vandyke is Rubens, with his hand on the shoulder of Le Seur; behind him is Le Brun; next are Julio Romano, Dominichino, and Annibal Carracci, who are in conversation with Phidias, behind whom is Giles Hufsey. Nicolas Pouffin and the Sicyonian Maid are near them, with Callimachus, and Pamphilus: near Apelles is Corregio; behind Raphael stand Michael Angelo, and Leonardo da Vinci; and behind them Ghiberti, Donatello, Massaccio, Brunaleschi, Albert Durer, Giotto, Cimabue, and Hogarth.

In the top of this part of the Picture, the Painter has happily glanced at what is called by Astronomers, the *System of Systems*, where the fixed stars, considered as so many

many suns, each with his several planets, are revolving round the *Great Cause* of all things ; and representing every thing as effected by *Intelligence*, has shewn each system, carried along in its revolution by an Angel. Though only a small portion of this circle can be seen, yet enough is shewn to manifest the sublimity of the idea.

In the other corner of the Picture, the Artist has represented Tartarus, where, among cataracts of fire and clouds of smoke, two large hands are seen, one of them holding a fire-fork, the other pulling down a number of Figures, bound together by serpents, representing War, Gluttony, Extravagance, Detraction, Parsimony, and Ambition ; and floating down the Fiery Gulph, are Tyranny, Hypocrisy, and Cruelty, with their proper attributes ; the whole of this excellent Picture proving, in the most forcible manner, the truth of that great maxim, which has been
already

already quoted, but cannot be too often inculcated :

THAT THE OBTAINING HAPPINESS,
AS WELL INDIVIDUAL AS PUBLIC,
BOTH IN THIS WORLD AND HERE-
AFTER, DEPENDS ON CULTIVATING
THE HUMAN FACULTIES.

AFTER this account and description of the Pictures painted by Mr. Barry, there remains only to state the sums expended by the Society on this occasion, with a view, not so much to the ornamenting the Room in which their meetings are held, as to prove to the world, in the most convincing manner, that the elegant Arts are not confined to any country, but that, under due encouragement and protection, they will prosper as well in England as in the warmer climate of Italy.

Expen-

*Expenditure on account of the Pictures
painted by Mr. Barry.*

	£.	s.	d.
For canvas, colours, frames, and other incidental charges — —	315	2	0
Expende of two exhibitions, including catalogues,	224	0	0
	<hr/>		
	539	2	0

Besides the Pictures already mentioned, the Room is still further ornamented by two whole-length Portraits; the one, painted by Mr. Gainborough, of the Lord Viscount Folkestone, the first President of the Society; the other, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of Lord Romney, the present President. On the South side of the Room are (presented by John Bacon, Esq. R. A.) two Casts in plaster from statues, the one of Mars, the other of Venus, designed and executed in marble by that excellent Artist, and for which
two

two Premiums offered by the Society, for promoting the art of Statuary in this country, had been adjudged to him ; and over one of the chimnies is a Clock of a curious construction, the gift of the late Mr. Thomas Grignion ; and over the other chimney, a Bust of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, by Mr. J. C. Lochée : on the North side of the Room are two Busts, presented by Mons. De la Blancherie ; the one, of the late Dr. Benjamin Franklin, formerly an active Member of this Society ; the other, of Monsieur Perronet : and over the Chair, a Miniature of Mr. W. Shipley, painted and presented by Mr. W. Hincks.



